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OPORTO UNIVERSITY'S SYMPOSIA ON TIMOR
SIX DIFFERENT INITIATIVES WITH THE SAME OBJECTIVE: SELF-DETERMINATION FOR EAST TIMOR

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1. Oporto University's President Professor Alberto Amaral: his support for and involvement in initiatives related to East Timor

When Oporto University's First Symposium on Timor took place on 10 September 1989, the Portuguese solidarity movement took a big step forward.

Indeed, until 1983, its actions seemed almost clandestine, due to the immense lack of support from most institutions, both state and private, for any initiatives related to East Timor.

Even when after a long time without news from the Timorese resistance Mons. Martinho Lopes brought back to Portugal in mid-1983 news and photographs of the historical encounter of Xanana Gusmao with the Commandant of the Indonesian Armed Forces in the territory (which resulted in a truce of some months, most of Portuguese society remained distant from the issue, ignoring the titanic struggle of the Maubere People, its grief, its failures, its tenacity and its successes. In this universe of ignorance and indifference, some well-known weekly newspapers even presented the historical encounter as though it were a surrender of FRETILIN. This was eleven years ago!

With the election of Professor Alberto Amaral to the Presidency, the University of Oporto began to offer a welcome to meetings, encounters and debates on East Timor. This was the case, for example, of:

> A cycle of debates which took place in Oporto University between 17 November 1986 and 26 January 1987, on the theme: East Timor: A Turning Point
>
> A working session organized by the President's Office of Oporto University which took place in the Circulo Universitario on 29 April 1989 on "East Timor: The Identity of its People and Perspectives for the Future"

But it was indeed with the First Symposium on Timor of Oporto University that a Portuguese university, a President's Office, and a President, for the first time opened its doors wide to the Maubere Cause, which at last was able to count on the support of a university and national institution.

2.I Symposium on Timor-September 1989

"History and Culture"

The objectives of the First Symposium, which took place in the Faculty of Engineering of Oporto on 10/17 September 1989, were:

"To learn about the history, culture, potential and reality of East Timor" on the one hand, and

"To create a space and opportunity for the agents of Timorese culture and those who have made its recent history to acknowledge and express themselves as such, revealing its history and culture."

In it participated 20 Timorese and 10 non-Timorese, as was the wish of the organizers.

The mornings were spent presenting and discussing papers and the afternoons were devoted to group work, mainly of dramatic expression, with the discreet and attentive support of the set designer Miguel Loureiro. From this Symposium emerged a marvelous performance on the life, death and struggle of the people of East Timor, titled "The People of Timor Can Be Nobody Else's Slave".

Timorese linked both to FRETILIN and UDT took part, as well as the Timorese Fatima Guterres and Father Apolinario Guterres, as well as the anthropologists Olympia Lameiras and Henry Campagnolo.

The excellent support of the Faculty of Engineering and the Department of Mining Engineering should also be pointed out.

Much to our surprise, when we asked Professor Alberto Amaral to write some words of introduction to the brochure on this First Symposium, the President remarked that he would support "the next Symposium."

3. II Symposium on Timor of Oporto University-April-May 1990

"East Timor: Land of Hope"

This support, as well as circumstances related to the diplomatic struggle at the time, determined the realization of the Second Symposium on Timor of Oporto University the following year, from 28 April to 3 May 1990.

Almost completely different from the First, it had nearly 150 participants enrolled, of which 50 were Timorese. An important delegation from the Ad Hoc Committe of the Portuguese Parliament, including MP Sousa Lara, President of the Committee, participated in this initiative.

The ex-President of Portugal Ramalho Eanes also took part, along with Dr. Rui Quartim Santos of the Foreign Ministry, etc.

Timorese National Convergence was represented by its leaders abroad, of FRETILIN (Dr. Abilio Araujo) and UDT (Dr. Paulo Pires), as well as the former representative of FRETILIN to the UN, Dr. Ramos Horta.

In addition, five foreigners took part, including an Indonesian political refugee, Liem Soei Liong, editor of the TAPOL Bulletin, a bimonthly review published in the UK on the political situation and human rights in Indonesia and East Timor; an Australian jurist, a British professor and the Bishop of New York (Ret.), Paul Moore Jr., of the Pentecostal Church (Anglican Communion) and his wife.

In the Second Symposium, Bishop Paul Moore Jr., of great prestige in the United States, painted a dramatic picture of the situation, based on his December 1989 visit to the territory with his wife.

His partipation in the Symposium, as well as the contacts which took place with the Government and the President of Portugal in the following days, were of the greatest interest. The same can be said of the subsequent actions of Bishop Paul Moore Jr. with members of the American Congress and others in defense of the people of East Timor and their rights.

On 3 May the Portuguese Parliament approved unanimously a vote of congratulations for the realization of the II Symposium on Timor of OU.

The conclusions of the debates were registered in a document of Synthesis sent to the governing bodies with proposals for initiatives in order to "promote and guarantee the right to self-determination of East Timor", as stipulated in the Portuguese Constitution.

Of the several proposals made at this time. some were carried out, such as:

The presentation by Portugal of a lawsuit, in the International Court of Justice of the Hague, against the treaty signed between Indonesia and Australia regarding the oil in the Sea of Timor;

The creation of a radio program on RDP International for Timor:

The development of lobbying activities in Washington and other capitals, etc.

Nonetheless, the "International Conference of Parliamentarians and Other Specialists, included for more than three (today we would say seven) years in the program of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Parliament, whose systematic and progressive postponement was criticized "(as was stated in the text of the Conclusions" has still to take place.

At the time there were grave deficiencies in the support of the Resistance, the Timorese Church, and the refugees, which unfortunately still exist, though somewhat mitigated.

A Foundation or Luso-Timorese Institute is still to be created, as was proposed in this Symposium.

The President's Office of Oporto University published, nearly two years later, a book in Portuguese, French, and English on this initiative, titled "East Timor: Land of Hope", which was sent to hundreds of specialists in Indonesian affairs and to many foreign universities.

4. III Symposium on Timor of OU-May 1991

"East Timor, Portugal and the International Community"

The III Symposium on Timor of OU, with the theme "East Timor, Portugal and the International Community" were very brief. They took place in the Faculty of Engineering on 9-11 May 1991, on the eve of the visit of Pope John Paul II to Portugal for the 13 May ceremonies in Fatima.

One of the main themes of the Symposium was the Church and East Timor, with incisive critiques of the performance of the Vatican and its diplomacy in relation to East Timor.

The President of Portugal, Dr. Mario Soares, presided over the Opening Session, in spite of his heavy agenda on this day.

Nearly 100 persons took part, including a delegation of the Parliament, once again presided by MP Sousa Lara, the President of the International Group "Parliamentarians for East Timor", Lord Avebury, and the Dutch MP Rob Van Gijzel, as well as a professor of the Sorbonne and two Indonesian political refugees residing in Europe.

5. IV Symposium on Timor of OU-April 1992

"Timor: Preparing the Future"

The IV Symposium was, once again. different from the preceding ones. It took on almost a residential character in the Seminary of Valadares, except for the Opening and Closing Sessions, which were open to the public and took place in the Amphitheater of the President's Office.

Many of the nearly 100 partipants were young people. and the dominant theme was:

"East Timor: Preparing the Future"

In the sessions, which took place between 11 and 16 April 1992, several foreign journalists who had witnessed the Santa Cruz massacre took part, along with members of the Mission Peace in Timor (Lusitania Express), including Dr. Rui Marques, its leader.

The Santa Cruz Massacre, as well as its repercussions in the awakening of the International Community to the issue of East Timor, was an important theme for study and debate.

"Ways of attaining peace and preparing the future" were also discussed.

The elaboration of internal television and radio programs, as well as a "newsletter" of the Symposium, were carried out as tasks with pedagogical functions. Worthy of note was the testimony of a young Timorese who had just arrived from the territory after escaping the Santa Cruz Massacre-Jose Amorim Dias- and the participation of many Timorese in the preparation and carring out of this Symposium.

6. V Symposium on Timor of OU-July 1993

"East Timor and Indonesia: Paths to Freedom, Self-Determination and Democracy"

For the first time, the V Symposium on Timor of OU took place in the Lisbon area, with the Opening Session in Lisbon on 22 July 1993, and the remaining sessions from 23 to 29 July in the Centro Escolar, Turistico e Hoteleiro of Estoril.

The decision of organizing the V Symposium on Timor was taken immediately after the capture of the leader of the Timorese Resistance, Xanana Gusmao. This capture, as well as the way in which it was exploited initially by the Indonesian authorities, provoked great discouragement among many people and institutions. In order to overcome this discouragement and pessimism, it was decided to make the Symposium larger in scale, with many foreign participants, whether or not there were funds to do so.

In spite of the terrible lack of funding, which was only resolved nearly a year after it took place, 46 foreign guests came to Portugal at the invitation of the organizing committee, in order to take part: 36 foreigners, 7 Timorese from Macau, and three other citizens holding Portuguese passports coming from three different continents.

Besides including many foreign participants, this Symposium was innovative in other ways:

a) The emphasis given to the partipation of Indonesian citizens who are struggling for democracy in their country;

b) The simultaneous realization of a Summer Course on

"Indonesia and East Timor" taught by some of the best specialists in the world on Indonesian affairs;

c) The change of venue to the Lisbon area;

d) The direct support of other Portuguese universities for this initiative.

Indeed, the organizers emphasized the partipation of Indonesian citizens, not only those residing in Europe (7) but also in Indonesia itself (4). Although one of these did not speak in public and another used a pseudonym, their participation, involving many risks of all sorts, was extremely important. Some Timorese, understandably hesitant at first, soon realized that the dictorial regime which oppressed them in East Timor was the same one which oppressed many Indonesians in their own country. A current of understanding and solidarity was thus created among all.

After partipating in the V Symposium on Timor of OU, Prof. George Aditjondro, of Salatiga University in Indonesia, gave several lectures and wrote articles and even a book severely criticizing the occupation of East Timor by the dictatorial regime and by the Armed Forces of his country.

These initiatives caused him to receive death threats and threats that he would lose his post as Professor in the University; his house was stoned, and so forth. None of this prevented him from participating, this year (1994) in the VI Symposium on Timor of OU.

The theme of the V Symposium was "East Timor and Indonesia: Paths to Freedom, Self-Determination and Democracy."

In it were discussed, in parallel sessions in six different rooms, nearly 75 papers on the following themes:

1. East Timor and Present-day International Politics
   (the UN. the USA, the Vatican, the EC, ASEAN, Japan, Australia)

2. Indonesia and East Timor
   (Two peoples struggling for freedom and democracy: their past, present and future perspectives)

3. Portugal and East Timor

   (Portugal's role in the past, today, in the immediate future, in a transitory phase and in the middle and long-term future)

4. The Citizens of the World and the Christian Churches: Non-Christian Religious Organizations and the Genocide of the Maubere People

   (Will silence continue to be the accomplice of the occupation and genocide?)

5. War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity in Timor

   (In Timor, as well as in the former Yugoslavia, to rape, torture, kill, cause disappearances and to carry out mass massacres, are also crimes...)

6. East Timor: Its History and Culture

(Unity amid cultural diversity; tradition and democracy; the influence of Portuguese language and culture in the past, present and future)

7. Needs and Economic and Social Potentialities of East Timor

(Sketch of a strategy for development)

8. Political organization for Timor

(Transitory organization and organization after independence)

For the first time other universities (the University of Coimbra and the Catholic University) joined, through their Presidents, this initiative.

This Symposium included three thematic sessions:

a) One with distinguished members of the Catholic Church, namely the Secretary of the Portuguese Conference of Bishops, Mons. Januario Torgal Ferreira. Bishop Fernando Luz Soares of the Lusitanian Church (Anglican Communion) and the President of the General Assembly of the Islamic Community of Lisbon. Dr. Suleiman Valy Mamede;

b) Another with members of the European Parliament and members of the Portuguese Parliament;

c) a third with University Presidents and professores, in which Prof. Alberto, President of Oporto University, Prof. Rui Alarcao, President of Coimbra University, and Dr. Silva Mota, Secretary of the Portuguese Catholic Univeristy, representing the President (Mons. Jose Policarpo) partipated.

Along with the Symposium, there was a First Course on Indonesia and East Timor, taught by some of the greatest world specialists in Indonesian affairs, namely Professor Benedict Anderson (Cornell University, USA), Prof. Daniel Lev (University of Washington) and Professor Roger Clark (Rutgers Law School, USA), and professors from Indonesia, Germany, France, Portugal, Brazil and Japan. The lack of Portuguese specialists, both in Indonesian and even Timorese affairs, was noted.

Around 36 foreigners (including the 11 Indonesians) and a significant delegation of Timorese resident in Macau took part in this Symposium. Nearly all were lodged in the Centro Escolar Turistico e Hoteleiro of Estoril, where all of the sessions except the opening session took place.

Emphasis should be given to the participation, for the first time, of members of the Government: the Secretary of State for Youth, Dr. Maria do Ceu Ramos and the Sub-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

Traditionally deficitary, in financial terms, with invitations to so many foreign participants--in order to internationalize the struggle-the Symposium became even more deficitary for nearly a year... For this reason, and for the historical circumstances in which they took place, this Symposium was particularly difficult and delicate.

But this Symposium, which took place for the first time far from Oporto,

with the opening session in Lisbon and the rest in Estoril--brought more good news from Indonesia—that the book published by the President's Office of OU "East Timor: Indonesian Occupation and Genocide", written by the Coordenator of the Symposium, was circulating clandestinely in Indonesia, in its 3rd edition, translated into the language of this country!

7. VI Symposium on Timor of OU-4 October 1994 to March 1995

"EAst Timor: An International Responsibility"

Finally, the VI Symposium on Timor of OU, which formally began on 4 October 1994, besides continuing for several monthes until March 1995,had already had sessions which were associated in a certain way, in Germany (the Iserlohn Conference on "The European Responsibility for East Timor") 30 September-2 October, with nearly 100 partipants, both German and foreign, and more than 20 Sessions and Working Meetings in Portugal.

The International and Opening Sessions took place in Oporto University on 4-5 October 1994. Five Indonesian citizens residing in Indonesia took part who had come from Indonesia expressly for the Symposium and the Iserlohn Conference. Two other Indonesian jurists were not able to leave the country, given the pressures and interrogations to which they were subjected shortly before the Symposium began. The main organizers of the Manila Conference (which took place from 31 May to 4 June 1994 in the Philippines) also took part. This conference on East Timortook place in spite of tremendous Indonesian pressure to prevent it and to prevent the entry of famous persons such as Nobel Peace Prize winner Mairead Maguire and Bishop Aloysius Soma of Japan.

Foreign participants always took part in the complementary sessions of the Symposium, which took place in the Universities of Oporto, Catholic (Lisbon and Porto), Coimbra, Minho, Lisbon, the New University of Lisbon, as well as another, very well attended, in the city of Figueira da Foz.

The Working Sessions included encounters with union leaders of UGT, CGTP and the Union of Journalists, with women's organizations, with solidarity groups and with the Timorese community. Also, a delegations of important Catholic foreign dignataries were received by the President and Secretary of the Portuguese Conference of Bishops, in Coimbra and Fatima, respectively.

In the VI Symposium, special emphasis should be given to the lunch given by the President of Portugal, Dr. Mario Soares, to nearly 20 guests of the 16 foreign countries present in the Symposium, in addition to Timorese representatives, Portuguese MPs and other personalities.

Also important was the meeting of Foreign Minister Dr. Durao Barroso with a delegation of nearly 10 participants in the VI Symposium. nearly all of whom were foreigners.

The dinner hosted by Oporto City Hall to the foreign guests was also significant, as an indication of the interest with which the city government and the Mayor, Dr. Fernando Gomes, follow the issue of Timor.

At present, the National Sessions of the VI Symposium on Timor of OU are taking place in the Faculty of Psychology of Lisbon University, with bi-weekly sessions on Saturday.

Alongside the VI Symposium the II IntroductoryCourse on Indonesia and East Timor is taking place in the Universities of Oporto, Coimbra and Lisbon.

This course was opened in Oporto by Professor George Aditjondro, immediately before he received an order to appear before the police of his country, Indonesia, and by Professor Benedict Anderson, of Cornell University, USA, in Coimbra and Lisbon. The national part of this course, like the Symposium, will last until the end of February, 1995, and is taught by the Coordenator of the Symposium.

The total number of persons participating in the Opening Sessions of the VI Symposium on Timor of OU, 4-5 October 1994 (nearly 200), in the Iserlohn Conference (nearly 100) and in the other Sessions and Meetings related to the Symposia, add up to nearly 1,300 people. In the II Introductory Course on Indonesia and East Timor nearly 40 persons are enrolled in Oporto, 30 in Coimbra and 110 in Lisbon, in a total of 180, most of whom are young people, including nearly 70 Timorese.

Emphasis should be given to the support given to the VI Symposium and the II Course by many solidarity organizations, foundations, official and private institutions, and the following universities: the Portuguese Catholic University (Oporto and Lisbon), of Coimbra, of Lisbon, and of the Minho.

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